



Strategy for Remote Food Security
National Indigenous Australians' Agency
via email: RemoteFSConsultations@niaa.gov.au

9 August 9, 2024

Letter of Support for the Alice Springs Dietitians' Submission to the NIAA's Strategy for Food Security in Remote First Nations Communities

Dear reader,

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (Congress) is a large Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS) based in Mparntwe (Alice Springs). Established more than 50 years ago, Congress is one of the most experienced organisations in the country in Aboriginal health, a national leader in primary health care, and a strong advocate for the health of our people. Congress delivers services to more than 17,000 Aboriginal people living in Mparntwe and remote communities across Central Australia including Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa), Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Wallace Rockhole, Utju (Areyonga), Mutitjulu, Amoonguna, Imanpa, Kaltukatjara (Docker River), and Yulara.

Congress has extensive experience of delivering comprehensive primary health care including multidisciplinary clinical care; health promotion and disease prevention programs; and action on the social, cultural, economic, and political determinants of health and wellbeing. This work has led us to develop a [Position Statement – Food Security](#) and to invest in important dietetics services. Congress' Dietetics team has a focus on improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people across the lifespan through nutrition education and support targeted towards optimising growth and development, chronic disease management, managing women's health conditions and reducing malnutrition. In addition, Congress operates a well-established and well-respected Child Youth and Families Division that assists young ones and families with support to be nurtured and grow, in order to thrive across the lifespan.

It is clear through this work, and in the literature, that the experience of a child is critical for a healthy life, and deficits at this time are powerfully linked to the development of chronic conditions later in life^{1,2}. Early childhood is therefore a key intervention point to establish and solidify healthy habits for the prevention of chronic conditions. As such, it is clear that the School Nutrition Program is a critical opportunity to support the exposure to healthy food options. Given the well-known challenges with food security in our region (as result of poverty, inequality) it may also be a child's only opportunity to receive essential healthy food options.

It is essential that the School Nutrition Program consistently provides healthy food options for our children and youth and Congress supports the inclusion of a review and monitoring of the School Nutrition Program as a part of the Strategy to ensure that food security is strengthened in remote and very remote First Nations communities across Australia.

Kind regards,

[Redacted Signature]

Marah Prior
General Manager Health Services Division



References:

1. Stanley F, Richardson S, and Prior M, (2005). *Children of the lucky country? How Australian society has turned its back on children and why children matter*. Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia.
2. Campbell, F.A., et al., (2014). *Early Childhood Investments Substantially Boost Adult Health*. Science. 343(6178): p. 1478-1485.

